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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - TSUNAMI: AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION

PARIS - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2004

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

TSUNAMI: AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION

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(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

LEAD STORIES AND HEADLINES IN THE NATIONAL PRESS ARE DEVOTED TO THE CALL FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. "LET'S GIVE" LEADS RIGHT-OF-CENTER

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LE PARISIEN, AND RIGHT-OF-CENTER ECONOMIC LES ECHOS PRAISES THE "MANY INITIATIVES TO HELP THE VICTIMS IN ASIA." RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR, FOR ITS PART, HEADLINES: "BUSH, BLAIR AND SCHRODER SHOW CONCERN FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE CATASTROPHE: AND CHIRAC SAYS NOTHING."

COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE'S REPORT "WHAT KIND OF COALITION IS NEEDED IN ASIA?" SUMMARIZES THE TONE OF THE EDITORIALS IN THE MAJORITY OF TODAY'S PRESS: "THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT DELIBERATELY DECIDED TO CIRCUMVENT THE UN BY PROPOSING AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION DEVOTED TO HUMANITARIAN AID. AND THE FACT THAT THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN BAM (IRAN) LAST YEAR ARE STILL WAITING FOR THE ASSISTANCE THAT THEY WERE PROMISED LEAVES US SKEPTICAL AS TO THE PURPOSE OF SUCH A COALITION." (SEE PART C)

NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT JEAN-LOUIS TURLIN FOR RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO ANALYZES THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO HOLD AN IMPROMPTU PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY: "THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT INTERRUPTED HIS VACATION IN TEXAS FOR A FEW MINUTES YESTERDAY TO HOLD A VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH HIS ADVISORS TO PERSONALLY RESPOND TO CRITICISM CONCERNING THE AMOUNT OF AID FROM WEALTHY COUNTRIES IN GENERAL AND THE U.S. IN PARTICULAR. IT WAS NECESSARY FOR GEORGE BUSH TO SHOW HIMSELF PUBLICLY IN ORDER TO DISPEL THE UNHEALTHY IMPRESSION OF A LACK OF CONCERN THAT CHARACTERIZED, NAMELY, THE PRE-SEPTEMBER 11 PERIOD."

PASCAL RICHE, THE WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT FOR LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION, PENS A LENGTHY OP-ED IN TODAY'S EDITION: "AMERICAN PROGRESS," WHICH OUTLINES THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN MENTALITY. "FRANCE LOVES TO HAMMER THAT AMERICAN SOCIETY IS ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE, RELIGIOUS, CLOSED, OBSESSED WITH MORAL VALUES, REACTIONARY. BUT IN FACT, AMERICAN SOCIETY IS INCREASINGLY LIBERAL AND SECULAR."

ANOTHER OP-ED IN LIBERATION BY AUTHOR ANTOINE AUDOUARD PUTS FORWARD THAT " `FRENCH-BASHING' REMAINS A POPULAR SPORT IN THE U.S." "THE FRENCH WOULD BE WRONG TO THINK THAT THE CRISIS IS BEHIND US. INDEED, `FRENCH-BASHING' IS NO LONGER CONTINGENT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION, IT HAS BECOME CULTURAL."

IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF GEOPOLITICS, JACQUES SOPPELSA'S BY-LINER ENTITLED "BUSH 2, NOW WHAT?" OUTLINES WHAT HE SEES AS THE CHANGES THAT CAN BE EXPECTED IN AMERICAN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY DURING THE NEW TERM.

LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE CARRIES AN OP-ED ENTITLED "HOW TO DEAL WITH TEHRAN" SIGNED BY SIX FORMER FOREIGN MINISTERS: MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, LLOYD AXWORTHY, ROBIN COOK, HUBERT VEDRINE, LAMBERTO DINI, NIELS HELVEG PETERSEN, ANA PALACIO AND JOZIAS VAN AARTSENRIGHT, THAT ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN ENGLISH IN THE TORONTO STAR. "THE IRANIANS HAVE MADE SPLITTING THE ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP THEIR MODUS OPERANDI, HOPING THAT DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE WILL BUY THEM THE TIME TO PROGRESS DOWN THE NUCLEAR PATH TO THE POINT OF IRREVERSIBILITY. IN ORDER TO COUNTERACT THIS STRATEGY, EUROPEAN AND U.S. POLICYMAKERS MUST REPEATEDLY AND JOINTLY ARTICULATE THAT THEY SEEK TO HOLD IRAN TO THE OBLIGATIONS IT HAS ACCEPTED UNDER THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY TO REFRAIN FROM BUILDING NUCLEAR ARMS."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

TSUNAMI: AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION

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"WELL-MANAGED CHARITY"

STEPHANE MARCHAND'S EDITORIAL IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (12/30): "INTERNATIONAL AID TO THE VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI IN ASIA REPRESENTS, AMONG OTHER THINGS A DIPLOMATIC GESTURE, A POLITICAL AFFIRMATION. A COUNTRY THAT GIVES PROVES ITS GENEROSITY IN THE EYES OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION AND ASSERTS IT STANDING IN THE WORLD. I GIVE THEREFORE I COUNT. BUT BEWARE OF THE CONTRARY. A NATION, POWERFUL THOUGH IT MAY BE, THAT IS PERCEIVED AS INDIFFERENT OR STINGY WILL BE HARSHLY JUDGED. THE U.S. HAS JUST HAD A BITTER TASTE OF THIS FACT. WHEN IT BECAME KNOWN THAT THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY ON THE PLANET HAD PROMISED 15 MILLION DOLLARS IN AID TO THE VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI, THERE WAS A GENERAL UPROAR. 15 MILLION DOLLARS IS A RIDICULOUS FIGURE GIVEN THE SCOPE OF THE CATASTROPHE. 15 MILLION DOLLARS OF LESS THAN HALF OF WHAT IS BOUGHT IN DOG AND CAT FOOD IN THE U.S. EVERYDAY. IT IS TEN TIMES LESS THAN THE DAILY COST OF THE WAR IN IRAQ. IT IS HALF THE PRICE OF A F16. THE U.S. QUICKLY DECIDED TO UP THE ANTE, BUT A SERIOUS MISTAKE IN TERMS OF COMMUNICATION HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE, WHICH IS ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS WHEN 5 BILLION TELEVISION VIEWERS ARE WATCHING. AMERICA'S IMAGE OF A SUPERPOWER AT TIMES CRUSHING AND AT TIMES BENEVOLENT IS AT STAKE. OF ALL OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS, THE U.S. IS THE ONE THAT CONTRIBUTES THE LEAST TO POOR COUNTRIES. AMERICA IS PAYING A HIGH POLITICAL PRICE FOR THIS PITIFUL REPUTATION. ASIA, AND FOREMOST JAPAN AND CHINA, HAVE BECOME THE KEYSTONE OF AMERICA'S ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SECURITY. AND THAT IS PRICELESS."

"THE PEOPLE AND THE MISERS"

JEAN-PAUL PIEROT IN COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE (12/30): "THE OUTBURSTS OF GENEROSITY FROM ORDINARY CITIZENS AND NGOS HAS SERVED TO underscore THE STINGINESS OF THE RICHEST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD. AFTER THE SCOLDING THAT BUSH GOT FOR PROMISING ONLY 15 MILLION DOLLARS IN AID TO THE VICTIMS OF THIS CATASTROPHE, HE DECIDED TO ADD A MISERABLE 20 MILLION MORE. IS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO NOTE ONCE AGAIN THAT THE COST OF THE WAR IN IRAQ EXCEEDS 200 BILLION DOLLARS? AND ONCE AGAIN THE WHITE HOUSE IS PROVING ITS UNILATERALIST TENDENCY BY PROPOSING TO CREATE AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION (A COPY OF THE ONE CREATED FOR THE WAR IN IRAQ) THAT IT ALONE, WITHOUT THE UN, WOULD MANAGE TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE."

"GLOBALIZED SOLIDARITY"

THE UNSIGNED EDITORIAL IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE (12/30): "THE FACT THAT THE WORLD HAS COME TOGETHER IS DUE, IN PART, TO THE SPEED OF INFORMATION EXCHANGE TODAY WHICH LENDS A NEW DIMENSION TO SOLIDARITY. THIS ALSO IS GLOBALIZATION. BUT THIS MOBILIZATION POSES A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PROBLEMS. THE FIRST HAS TO DO WITH THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROMISES AND ACTIONS. WHILE THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS WILL DO THEIR PART AND STAND BY THEIR COMMITMENTS, HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TEND NOT TO BE SO RIGOROUS. OF THE BILLION DOLLARS THAT WERE ALLOTTED TO HELP THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN BAM IN 2003, ONLY 17 MILLION DOLLARS HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN RECEIVED. A CERTAIN DEGREE OF COORDINATION IS NECESSARY TO MANAGE RELIEF EFFORTS. AND ONLY THE UN HAS THE CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THIS TYPE OF PLANNING."

"LACK OF FORESIGHT"

THE EDITORIAL IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION BY GERARD DUPUY (12/30): "WITH 100,000 BODIES AND MILLIONS OF LIVES SHATTERED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST ADMIT TO ITS LACK OF FORESIGHT AND BUSH IS FIRST ON THE LIST. IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, HISTORY IS HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. GENEROSITY IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE IF IT DOES NOT ALSO INCLUDE A MEASURE OF FORESIGHT. AND SIGNIFICANT SUMS, THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE FEW MILLION EUROS OR DOLLARS THAT HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO THE VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI SO FAR. WILL BE NEEDED TO PROVIDE POOR COUNTRIES WITH EARTHQUAKE DETECTORS AND DECENT COMMUNICATION NETWORKS." WOLFF